



River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash®

Help Clean up Our Waterways with the 16th Annual *Trash Bash*

By Jerrel Geisler – Lake Houston Marina Trash Bash Coordinator

Photos by Jerrel Geisler, Brenda Templeton & Susan Smyer

With a resounding “Clean it Like You Mean It” each year in March, thousands of volunteers fan out along local waterways from Lake Conroe to the Texas City Dike, from Lake Houston to White Oak Bayou, as a part of the annual *Lake, Bays n’ Bayous Trash Bash*.

This year, volunteers will gather on March 28, 2009, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at their local waterways to participate in the 16th annual event. Coordinated by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the regional event is financed by local and regional sponsors and the Texas Conservation Fund.

Since 1994, the Trash Bash has seen over 60,000 volunteers collect almost 2,000 tons of trash. Governmental and municipal organizations, schools, environmental, regulatory and youth organizations assist in coordinating the local activities of 17 sites throughout the region. Clean-up sites and waterways include Lake Houston, Lake Conroe, Armand Bayou, Brays Bayou, Buffalo Bayou (two locations), Dickinson Bayou, Galveston Bay (several locations), Green Bayou, Houston Ship Channel, Japhet Creek, Little White Oak Bayou, Sims Bayou and White Oak Bayou (2 locations). Participation in the 2009 event is expected to grow as some sites are still littered with trash and debris from Hurricane Ike. As a result, Coordinators will be increasing collection efforts throughout 2009.

Historically, the Lake Houston Trash Bash is one of the original clean-up sites. Lake Houston Marina (10611 F.M. 1960 East at McKay Bridge (Key-Map 338-Q), Huffman, Texas) has hosted the Lake Houston clean up effort. Our mission is to promote public education in environmental stewardship of our watershed by utilizing hands-on educational tools and by developing partnerships between environmental, governmental, and private organizations.

What will a day as a volunteer be like at Lake Houston? The Lake Houston Marina serves as the location where volunteers gather around 8:30 a.m. for registration, safety equipment, assignments, and a Trash Bash t-shirt. Scouts are also given patches to commemorate their participation.

The two satellite locations on Lake Houston are cleaned the day of the event and managed from the Marina. These two sites include Luce Bayou Camp at 27514 Huffman-New Caney Road at Luce's Bayou (Key-Map 299- S & W), Huffman, Texas; and Newport Beach at Diamondhead Blvd. off FM 2100 (Key-Map 418-Y), Crosby, Texas. Volunteers at these sites include local residents, school and scout groups and

City of Houston employees who volunteer their time. The Newport site is also primarily cleaned by Cub and Boy Scout groups as well as Crosby and Newport Residents.

No matter which site you're at, you'll receive clean-up supplies and safety equipment before being sent out. Some volunteers may get a free boat ride as local residents and organizations bring their boats to the marina and take volunteers to sites on the lake generally inaccessible from the shore! Volunteers should plan to work until approximately 12 noon when everyone returns to the start-up site for an appreciation barbeque luncheon provided through Trash Bash donations. A drawing is also held with prizes donated by local merchants and the Trash Bash fund. Finish out the afternoon by enjoying local entertainment and visiting educational booths and activities provided by local environmental groups, sponsors and other organizations that have included the Houston Police Lake Patrol, Mounted Patrol and Helicopter Squad and City of Houston Neighborhood Protection, Solid Waste Department, Water Conservation, Source Water Protection and Drinking Water Operations.

For information on preparing for and working at the Trash Bash, go to the website: www.trashbash.org. All safety guidelines, proper clothing and footwear, where and where not to venture, as well as what and what not to pick up, are listed there. All volunteers participating in the event must be registered to be covered by Trash Bash insurance. Trash Bash has always been held, rain or shine. However please consult the website for event status on March 28th if in doubt.

Coordination of the Lake Houston Trash Bash sites is managed by the City of Houston Drinking Water Operations Branch's Senior Communications Specialist, Jerrel Geisler. A local site committee is made up of local residents, organizations, businesses and City of Houston employees. This program is made possible by the generous contributions and support of our sponsors. All donations are managed and requested through the Texas Conservation Fund. Industry incentives may be sought through Trash Bash organizers.

Some of the many sponsors for the 2008 event included Lake Houston Marina and Chef Ko, Texas Adaptive Aquatics, Crosby State Bank, Alspaugh's Ace Hardware-Kingwood, Crosby/Huffman Chamber of Commerce, Panalpina, Newport Country Club, Jimmy's Real Pit Barbeque, and Wal-Mart.

We welcome additional sponsors and donations for our March 2009 event. Please check out our sponsorship opportunities and industry incentives to see how your company can benefit from being a Trash Bash partner while making a significant and positive impact on our Texas waterways. For information on sponsorships of the overall event please go to www.trashbash.org for more information.

To volunteer locally at Lake Houston, be a part of the site committee or acquire additional information, please visit the website or email Jerrel Geisler at jerrel.geisler@cityofhouston.org or call 832-395-3780.

Please join us for the 2009 event as we *Bash the Trash* around Lake Houston!